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BACK TO THE LAND!



By Commander
Booth-Tucker.

Back to the Land——



Or, The Ten-Acre Farms of
The Salvation Army.

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Is not the condition of the poor in the United States very serious?

Undoubtedly so. It is generally admitted that from three to four million of the population are utterly destitute, while among many of those in actual work there is a terrible feeling of unrest owing to the uncertainty of employment.

What remedy does the Salvation Army propose?

Our founder and leader, General William Booth, has laid down a two-fold remedy:

- (a) *Change the man.*
- (b) *Change his circumstances.*

What do you mean by "Change the man"?

We believe firmly in the great Gospel remedy for the sins and sorrows of the world—*Salvation through the Blood of Jesus*. A drunkard in a palace will be a drunkard still, unless a change is effected in his moral nature.

What do you mean by "Change his circumstances" ?

We believe that it is of the very essence of the Gospel to deal with the man's actual difficulties, to give bread to the hungry and to clothe the naked.

In what way do you propose to handle the question ?

By removing the Idle Labor from the cities and placing it upon the Idle Land by means of the Idle Capital This seems the only natural solution of the present congestion of our population.

Will not the people in the cities be unwilling to go back to the land ?

By no means. There are thousands of people in every city who would be only too glad to get on to the land if they only had a fair chance. Especially is this the case with those who have families, and who will be glad of the change from the attics and slums to the freedom and health of country life. Many of them have been brought up in the country, and will be only too thankful to go back.

Will not the life be too lonely for them ?

On a large ranch this might doubtless be the case. But it will be quite different with our small ten-acre farms, where they will all be close to one another. Besides this we shall send them in families, several hundreds at a time. Then, too, there will be the bright Salvation Army meetings at night, with the brass band and plenty of music when their day's work is over.

Are you only going to allow Salvationists to go to these Colonies ?

Oh, no! Anybody will be accepted who has a character for honesty, sobriety and industry. Nobody will be obliged to attend the meetings, though of course we shall encourage them to do so, and shall make them heartily welcome. Nevertheless, the more Salvationists we get the better, and our own soldiers may feel free to apply from all over the country. Many who are not suited to be officers will be able in this way to spend their lives in helping to save others.

What is your plan for the Colony ?

We propose to buy large tracts of land which can be irrigated, and divide it into five and ten-acre tracts, where vegetables, fruit and other

produce can be cultivated, and a sufficient profit made to get a comfortable living for a family.

Don't you think five or ten acres will be too little ?

No. You see if a man has more than this, he is obliged to employ hired labor, which is expensive and unsatisfactory. Ten acres of good, irrigated land is quite as much as one man and his family can properly manage.

Why do you lay so much stress upon irrigation ?

The great advantage of irrigation is that you can just turn your water on and off when you require. You are like your own cloud-maker. In countries, too, where irrigation is practised you generally have a small rainfall and plenty of sunshine.

Would it not be better to plant your Colonies where there is plenty of rain and irrigation is unnecessary ?

Ultimately we shall undoubtedly do so, but the trouble is that you are liable to have too much rain and too little sun, or too little rain and too much sun. One year you are liable to floods and the next to droughts. Whichever you have, your crops suffer, and your colonists get discouraged.

Where, then, do you propose to locate your Colonies ?

Sooner or later we shall have them in every State. But at first we propose to plant them in the magnificent irrigated lands of the Mid-western States.

Would it not be better to begin them in the East and thus have them as near as possible to the largest markets ?

We shall probably start some small Colonies in the East at an early date. In fact, we have already been hunting for land for this purpose. But the trouble is that in the East we can get very little elbow room, and land is much more expensive. You see we should have to give at least twice as much for really good land, and being mostly unirrigated and hilly we should require more of it; hence, to plant poor people on it would cost a great deal, and it would take a longer time for them to earn the money to pay for their homes. Besides, a great deal of the land would require to be cleared of trees, which would further add to the expense. And much money would also have to be spent on artificial fertilizers.

Tell me some of the advantages of these Midwestern lands.

Well, in the first place, the *climate* is the grandest in the world. Many diseases, such as fever and consumption, are cured by it, and the colonists would be sure to enjoy the best of health. Malaria and consumption are almost unknown.

That certainly sounds excellent, but what about the soil?

Why that is almost better than the climate. For nearly every crop the farmers never dream of using fertilizers, the soil is so rich. The mountain rivers and canals which water these plains are usually full of a deposit which is the best fertilizer in the world.

But, if there is so little rain, where does the water come from?

From God's reservoirs, the snow-capped peaks of the Rocky Mountains. You see the snow melts just at the right time, when the sun is hot and the water is most needed.

What is the nature of the country ?

It is almost all a level tableland, with just sufficient slope to carry the flow of the water. There are no tree stumps to dig up, no stones to stop the plough. The rich, deep soil has only to be turned over and it will grow almost anything. It is a common saying that if you sit upon a cabbage it will grow through you!

What do you think of the South as a field for colonization ?

We have some excellent openings there, of which we shall certainly take advantage at an early date.

What sort of farming do you propose the Colonists to go in for ?

Mixed farming, so that they may have as many strings as possible to their bow. Besides ordinary vegetables, such as potatoes, tomatoes and cantelopes, there would be fruit trees and berries of all sorts. Then they would have poultry, pigs, cows, cattle, and, in short, everything of the kind. Bees, too, are very paying. Abundant crops of alfalfa (lucern) are produced, which are not only excellent for honey, but also for fattening cattle.

Really, I feel tempted to become a Colonist. But tell me: what will one of these ten-acre farms of yours cost?

About \$500. This would include the cost of the land and a cheap cottage, together with a few improvements.

You don't mean to say so! However can you manage to do it so cheaply?

Well, you see, we buy the land in large blocks of not less than 1,000 acres, so that we are able to get it at about one-half the price it would cost an ordinary settler. In fact agents as a rule will not take the trouble to sell a man so small a piece of land. They want him to take at least forty or eighty acres. And then he has often to borrow money at a high rate of interest for his cottage and all his improvements.

But supposing he has not the money to pay with, what will you do then—will you give him time?

Most certainly. We expect to have three classes of people come to us:

1. There will be those who can buy their farm outright. This will save their paying any interest. They will have a warranty deed

for their farm at once, and they can put up whatever sort of a cottage they please.

2. Others will be only able to pay part of the price. They can pay the rest off in weekly installments of from one to two dollars. A good harvest will often enable them to pay in two or three years.

3. There will be those who cannot pay anything down. We shall enable them to pay in weekly installments of from one to two dollars, till the place is quite their own.

How long do you think it will usually take a man to pay for his farm when he has no money to start with?

Well, we shall allow him ten or even fifteen years, but we do not expect it will ordinarily take him more than five. We have met numbers of people who have paid for their farms in one, two, or three years, though the land alone has cost them from \$75 to \$100 an acre, while with us it will usually cost about \$25. Quite a number of families told us that after paying all their expenses they were saving \$500 a year. In one little town a bank manager told us that he had three hundred savings deposits from these small farmers.

Really, you surprise me very much. I have been accustomed to hear that farming does not pay.

That is only where people get such large tracts of land that they are obliged to hire labor. The small farmers who own and cultivate the fields themselves almost always make a good living out of the land. It is so in Germany, France and India, and indeed in every country where the small farmer has not been driven off the land.

What must I do if I want to be a Colonist?

Write to the Social Secretary, at the National Headquarters, 120 W. 14th Street, New York City. He will send you an application form to fill up, and will give you any further information you may require.

But supposing I don't know anything about agriculture?

Still you can apply. In the principal cities we have started regular classes which you can attend, where you will hear lectures on farming by good practical farmers. And then when you are on the farm there will be skilled persons to instruct you, and to protect you from being cheated in any way, and to help you sell your produce at the best prices.

Could I go on trial and give it up if I find it does not suit me?

Why, certainly! If we think you are likely to make a suitable colonist, we shall tell you so, and if we are not of that opinion, we shall also tell you so. If we think you suitable there will be no difficulty in your going on trial, though we should probably in that case think it wise for you to leave your family at home. We could also arrange for you to pay a visit to the Colony and get you a cheap ticket for this purpose, provided that you were able to pay for it.

Supposing after I have been making my weekly payments for several years family circumstances should occur which make it necessary for me to go elsewhere before I had made my full payment for the land, should I forfeit all the payments I had made?

No, certainly not! This is one of the advantages of the scheme. If you had been industrious, and had improved your farm, we should doubtless be able without difficulty to supply another colonist to take your place, and we should return you a fair proportion of what you had paid, or if you so preferred it, we should be able to exchange your farm in one part of the country with a similar farm in another.

What sort of a cottage should I have ?

This would depend on whether you were able yourself to contribute anything. For those who are unable to do so we propose to put upon the land a small cottage costing about \$100, which would be so built, that when by your savings you had enough money to put up a larger cottage, we could buy the first one back from you and move it to another piece of land. If, on the other hand, you could add a few dollars of your own we should give you the opportunity of getting a better class of cottage than the first.

But will you not be requiring in a large settlement of this kind a number of carpenters, blacksmiths, tailors, etc. ?

Yes, certainly! And we shall provide some cottages for such, with only one or two acres of land attached. We think everybody ought to have some land, so as to help out what they may earn by their wages.

What about teachers ?

Yes, certainly, we shall require quite a number. They will be able either to board with other residents or to have little cottages of their own at a very cheap rental.

Will there not be an opening for some stores ?

Yes, certainly! We shall encourage people to come and settle amongst us for this purpose. It is probable, also, that we shall have a co-operative store in each settlement where goods will be sold at the regular market price and a share of the profits will go to those who deal at it.

Will there be any churches on the land ?

Yes, certainly! We expect that many churches will be built by their various denominations as soon as people get settled.

What are the railway facilities ?

We shall endeavor in every case to place our Colonies close to some railway station, so that they may be able easily to dispose of their produce. For instance, we are arranging that our first great Colony shall be in Colorado, in the valley of the Arkansas River. The well known Santa Fé Railway runs right through this valley. The officials of this company have a national reputation for their splendid business ability and enterprise. They have manifested from the first the warmest interest in

our plans, have thrown open their lands to us for colonization, and have promised us their hearty co-operation. Five or six other railway companies run to Pueblo and Denver, and we have reason to believe that they all will give us any assistance in their power.

Our Colony in California is three miles from the nearest railway station, and a second railway is likely to run through the land in the course of a short time.



N.B.—Now, if you have any other questions to ask, don't hesitate to write fully, as we shall be glad to supply you with all the information in our power. If there is a colonists' class in your city, you can go for information there. If not, you can write to the Social Secretary, 120 W. 14th Street, New York City.

If you have land which you wish to offer us, don't hesitate to send us full particulars, stating the terms on which it can be obtained and the possibility of raising the necessary capital.

OUR SOCIAL STATISTICS.



FOR THE WORLD.

Food depots and shelters for the homeless,	95
Homes for fallen women,	69
Homes for ex-criminals,	14
Homes for waifs and strays,	2
Factories and workshops for unemployed,	49
Labor bureaus for the unemployed,	29
Inquiry bureaus for lost friends,	42
Farm colonies,	11
Servants' homes,	3
Hospitals,	2
Poor men's lawyer,	1
Collection bureau,	1
Slum posts,	95
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Total Social Institutions,	413

Officers and employees managing same, ..	1,400
Total accommodations for persons daily fed and sheltered in the same,	10,000

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Total cost of City Colony in London in 1896,	\$493,000
Paid in cash and work by people helped,	470,000
Total cost of sheltering and feeding more than 5,000 persons daily,	23,000
What it would have cost the State to do the same thing with the taxpayers' money,	600,000

FOR THE UNITED STATES.

16 Food and shelter depots for men, accommodating	2,121
1 Food and shelter depot for women, accommodating	40
9 Rescue homes for fallen women, accommodating	200
2 Prison-gate homes and farms, accommodating	70
1 Farm colony, accommodating	20
2 Children's homes for waifs and strays, accommodating	60

1 Children's day nursery, accommodating	20
4 Salvage brigades, employing	47
5 Wood yards for unemployed.	
15 Slum posts, under 44 officers.	
1 Poor men's lawyer.	
1 Collection bureau.	
1 Inquiry department for lost friends.	
1 Interstate labor bureau for unemployed.	
Total institutions,	60
Total accommodations in same,	2,531
Total officers managing same,	163

